UNIT 11 Cross-Cultural Viewpoints

Reading 1 Approaches to Education

Approaches to Education

Parents all over the world seek to give their children the best education possible so they can lead happy and successful lives. But what is the most (A) [effectively / effective] way to teach the next generation? (①) Many people believe Singapore provides a clear model for success. (②) The city-state (B) [have been achieved / has achieved] outstanding academic results by implementing a rigorous education system. (③) Schools value hard work and diligence. (④) And those that achieve top grades in national examinations (C) [are / is] rewarded with places at elite universities and high-paying jobs. (⑤) There are growing voices criticizing this performance-oriented evaluation of students.

1. Choose the sentence that does NOT belong.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

2. Choose the grammatically correct words for (A), (B) and (C).

① effectively - have been achieved - are

② effective - have been achieved - are

③ effectively - has achieved - is

④ effective - has achieved - are

⑤ effective - has achieved - is

Singaporean classrooms are known for being both _____. Students are typically very well-behaved and listen carefully to their teachers. Teachers act mainly as lecturers, while students are expected to take notes and answer questions correctly when called on. (①) Homework and additional study outside of the classroom are also a central part of the education system. (②) According to recent research, Singaporean high-school students spend an average of ten hours per week on homework. (③) Most also spend time at after-school academies or with private tutors.

(④) The success of the Singaporean model would seem to confirm many parents' belief that hard work, repetition, and memorization are the keys to educational success. (⑤) As with Singapore, the European nation features at the top of international rankings for educational achievement.

3. Where is the best place to insert the sentence below?

<u>However, Finland illustrates how a very different approach can also have exceptional results.</u>

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

4. Choose the words that best fit in the blank.

① autonomous and informal

② strict and competitive

③ effective and economical

④ dominant and authoritative

⑤ oppressive and cruel

The school experience in Finland is very different from that in Singapore. The school day is ① much shorter, and students are assigned little homework. Classes are usually smaller, and there is far more group- and project-based learning. The result is that classrooms tend to feel more ② relaxed and informal than in Singapore. Teachers are expected ③ to be mentors rather than instructors. And they tend to stay with a specific class throughout that class´s school career. This allows them to get to know each student´s strengths and weaknesses and ④ guides them accordingly. Another important difference between the two systems ⑤ is the emphasis on competition. Finnish students are judged on their achievement of personal goals rather than their scores on national tests.

5. Which of the following is grammatically incorrect?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

6. What is NOT true of the school in Finland?

① It gives students less homework.

② It provides group and project-based education.

③ Its atmosphere is relaxed and informal.

④ It has a way for teachers to know more about students.

⑤ It emphasizes test scores to students.

Despite achieving consistently high rankings, both countries have found some aspects of their education systems (A) [criticized / praised] in recent years. Constant competition and long hours can be very hard on young Singaporeans, who often suffer from stress and fatigue. _____A_____, the Singaporean government is now encouraging teachers to create more student-focused classrooms with (B) [less / more] emphasis on study for examinations. _____B_____, some people in Finland now worry that the government has given teachers and students too much (C) [dependence / independence]. Without regular testing, there are concerns that some schools may not be performing as well as others. This has led some to suggest that the government should be given more direct control over the school curriculum.
Whether or not these changes further improve these education systems is yet to be seen. What is clear, however, is that school systems around the world will continue to learn a lot from this pair of high achievers.

7. Choose the correct words for the blank A and B.

① As a result - Conversely

② In fact - Similarly

③ In contrast - However

④ Furthermore - For instance

⑤ Instead - Simultaneously

8. Choose the correct words for (A), (B), and (C)

① praised - more - independence

② praised - less - dependence

③ praised - less - independence

④ criticized - less - independence

⑤ criticized - more - dependence

Title: _____

Around the world, students are expected to spend most of the day sitting, making notes, and completing assignments. However, research continues to show that the stress of study can have negative effects on a child's health and development. As a result, many researchers are now looking for ways to give young people more freedom to explore and enjoy the world away from their desks.

(A) And it is not only very young learners who can benefit from more time spent outdoors. Many Scandinavian elementary, middle, and high schools now encourage teachers to hold classes outside at least one day a week. These teachers continue to follow the curriculum, but they use the natural world to teach math, science, and even languages. For example, students might calculate the volume of a tree or write poetry about nature.

(B) Many countries now have forest-school programs for very young learners. But there is still concern that this approach could harm older children's academic performance. Nevertheless, evidence that learning outdoors can reduce stress and improve the well-being of all age groups continues to grow. This means that we may see more schools of this type opening up around the world very soon.

(C) One such approach is known as "forest school." Started in Scandinavia in the 1950s, this type of school was first aimed at very young learners. Kindergarten students were encouraged to play freely in nature under their teachers' supervision. Studies found that these learners became more confident and independent than regular kindergarten students. They were more willing to share—say, a pretty flower or an interesting bug—with other children. They were also more caring when others got upset.

9. What is the correct order of the paragraphs?

① (A) - (C) - (B)

② (B) - (A) - (C)

③ (B) - (C) - (A)

④ (C) - (A) - (B)

⑤ (C) - (B) - (A)

10. What is most likely the title of the passage?

① Benefits of "forest school"

② Different types of learners

③ Places to experience nature's beauty

④ The importance of teachers' supervision

⑤ How to make kindergarten students feel confident

Reading 2 Responding to Declining Populations

Responding to Declining Populations

A UN projection suggests that the global population will peak at 10.9 billion by the year 2100 and then begin ① dropping. This growth, however, will not be universal among nations. The populations of many countries are already falling or are expected to fall in the next several decades. This is mainly due to ② decreasing birth rates. Some researchers ③ connect the drop in fertility to unintended consequences of improvements in women's education and access to contraception. Increased living costs and ④ more societal pressure to have children are also contributing factors. Many authorities are now taking steps to ⑤ reverse the worrying trend of decreasing births.

11. Which of the following underlined words is NOT suitable to the context?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

12. What is most likely the main idea of the passage?

① UN's innovative policies to increase fertility

② Universal efforts to prevent population decline

③ Many counties' population reduction and its causes

④ Some researchers' prediction on the global population

⑤ The reason for increased living costs

Germany is one example. Its population dropped in 2020 for the first time in ten years. In 2021, it averaged only 1.6 offspring per woman—far below the 2.1 births (A) (required / requiring) to maintain a steady population. Germany is already one of the world's oldest nations, with people over sixty-five making up twenty-one percent of residents. The number of German taxpayers is decreasing just as the number of those who depend on the government in retirement is growing. As a result, the country has begun allocating more money to childcare and paid time off for parents in order to encourage families (B) (have / to have) more children.

Hungary has gone even further. In 2011, it had the lowest birth rate in the EU, at only 1.2 births per woman. Several years later, the government decided to compensate couples with large families. Women with four or more offspring do not have to pay income taxes ever again. Married couples with multiple children can also now have their homes and cars partially (pay / paid) for by the state. This effort seems to be working. Hungary's birth rate has been slowly increasing since those policies were put in place.

13. Choose the correct words for (A), (B) and (C).

① requiring - have - pay

② requiring - to have - paid

③ required - have - pay

④ required - to have - paid

⑤ required - to have - pay

14. What is most likely the title of the passage?

① Two countries with the world's lowest fertility rate

② Efforts of Germany and Hungary to increase their populations

③ Germany's impact on Hungary's population policies

④ How governments can help people in returement

⑤ Married couple's opposition against income taxes

Another country ① whose government is (A) (concerned / satisfied) over falling fertility is Iran. Its population is expected ② to start declining in about twenty years. ③ Because of poverty caused by a lack of international trade, Iran does not have enough wealth ④ providing (B) (direct / indirect) help the way Germany and Hungary can. Instead, vasectomies are no longer (C) (withheld / provided) by state hospitals. They are only available for men ⑤ who can prove the procedure's medical necessity.

15. Choose the correct words for (A), (B), and (C).

① concerned - direct - withheld

② satisfied - indirect - provided

③ concerned - indirect - provided

④ satisfied - direct - withheld

⑤ concerned - direct - provided

16. Which of the following is grammatically incorrect?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Of course, some people have no objection to falling birth rates. Studies have identified potential benefits, such as more affordable homes, cleaner air, and more green spaces. The British economist Adair Turner argues that a smaller working population could mean less spending on construction and less pressure on the environment.

① Yet most nations with declining birth rates continue to encourage having more children. ② Many supporters of these policies believe that a decrease in population is a loss to us all, and not just economically. ③ People produce new ideas, art, and inventions—everything that makes life interesting. ④ As a writer for the *Irish Times* put it, "human innovation and ingenuity bless the world far more than human appetites damage it." ⑤

17. What is the closest meaning of the underlined part?

① study falling fertility very carefully

② do not oppose decreasing fertility

③ are embarrassed by low birth rate

④ think birth rates should be increased

⑤ find solutions for having more children

18. Where is the best place to insert the sentence below?

The more people, the better, they argue.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Boosting Populations with Immigration

Developed nations have long used immigration to make up for a _____ of workers. For example, thirteen percent of staff in the UK's National Health Service were born outside of the country. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that such workers often work on the very front line of the healthcare system.

(C) This approach to boosting the population seems to be succeeding. But while immigrants to Taiwan appear to be fairly welcome, they are still at risk of unfair treatment. Many arrive from developing countries. Like elsewhere, they might be badly paid, work dangerous jobs, and live in poor accommodations. Countries undoubtedly benefit from immigration, but they also need to ensure those arriving are treated fairly.

(A) Although also highly developed, Taiwan has always had a low rate of immigration, with strict laws governing how many people can move to the country. As a result, the streets of Taiwanese cities such as Taipei are not particularly diverse. However, because of its low fertility rate (1.07 births per woman, one of the lowest in the world), Taiwan's population is both falling and rapidly aging. One study found that by 2065, more than half of Taiwanese people will be sixty-five or older. For years the government has attempted to encourage its citizens to have more children, without much success.

(B) Some believe that immigration could be an important part of the solution to this problem. Over the past ten years, Taiwan has made it easier for students and workers to enter the country for long-term stays. In 2020, there were nearly 800,000 foreign residents in Taiwan, an all-time high.

19. Choose the word that best fits in the blank.

① crisis

② debate

③ complaint

④ lack

⑤ policy

20. What is the correct order of the paragraphs?

① (C) - (B) - (A)

② (B) - (A) - (C)

③ (C) - (A) - (B)

④ (A) - (C) - (B)

⑤ (B) - (C) - (A)

Answer Key

1. ⑤
2. ④
3. ⑤
4. ②
5. ④
6. ⑤
7. ①
8. ④
9. ④
10. ①
11. ②
12. ③
13. ④
14. ②
15. ⑤
16. ④
17. ②
18. ③
19. ④
20. ⑤